



inTouch Multicultural Centre
Against Family Violence

 **SETS** CoP

DOMESTIC AND FAMILY VIOLENCE (DFV) RISK ASSESSMENT AND SAFETY PLANNING

Guidance Document

If your client has disclosed they are experiencing DFV, check if they are in immediate danger. If so, ask them to call the Police (000). They may also call 1800RESPECT the national domestic, family and sexual violence counselling, information and support service (1800 737 732). Advise the client to request an interpreter if required.

If responding to DFV is not part of your role, immediately refer your client to specialists within your organisation or to your local DFV specialist agency. See '[Directory of Domestic and Family Violence Services](#)' for referral options within your State or Territory.

If conducting DFV risk assessment and safety planning is part of your role, your organisation may have its own tools for use.

Information on risk assessment and safety planning can be found at [1800RESPECT risk assessment and safety planning](#), which includes a [safety planning checklist](#).

Each state and territory has developed or is in the process of developing, its own state-based tools for DFV response. If your organisation doesn't have its own tool, it's recommended to use the tool developed by the state or territory you are in.

If responding to DFV is part of your role, you ought to be fully trained in conducting risk assessments and preparing safety plans with your clients, and how to use any organisational or state and territory tools for this.

It is important to establish rapport with your client to ensure they feel comfortable and safe during the assessment process. Ask your client if it's a safe time to talk and whether an interpreter is required. The questions listed in the tools are designed to guide conversations, rather than being asked verbatim. Ensure to use culturally responsive principles and a person-centred approach.

State and territory-based tools can be found below.

- Australian Capital Territory - [ACT Domestic And Family Violence Risk Assessment and Management Framework](#) – work in progress
- New South Wales - [Domestic Violence Safety Assessment Tool \(DVSAT\)](#)
- Northern Territory - [Northern Territory Domestic and Family Violence Risk Assessment and Management Framework \(RAME\)](#)
- Queensland - [Domestic and Family Violence Common Risk and Safety Framework](#)
- South Australia - [Family Safety Framework \(FSF\)](#)
- Tasmania – A standard risk assessment and safety planning process is under development. In the interim, it is suggested workers use their own organizational tool, the 1800RESPECT checklists or MARAM.
- Victoria - [Family Violence Multi-Agency Risk Assessment and Management Framework \(MARAM\)](#)
- Western Australia - [Western Australian Family and Domestic Violence Common Risk Assessment and Risk Management Framework \(CRARME\) Second edition](#)



The Victorian MARAM Practice Guide Responsibility 7:

Comprehensive Risk Assessment includes a section on 'risk assessment practice considerations across the community' (Appendix 13, p322).

This practice guide includes additional questions to ask clients from migrant and refugee communities, explanations of why it is important to ask these questions, and what you should keep in mind when asking them. It's encouraged you download Appendix 13 as a Word document and review pages 3-5, 'Questions for people from culturally and linguistically diverse and faith communities.'

THE QUESTIONS ARE:

1. If you are not a citizen or permanent resident, have they threatened your immigration or visa status, made threats to send you or your children overseas, or taken away your passport?
2. If you were thinking about separating from your partner, would your family or friends be supportive? (exploration of other risks in relation to this question, such as honour killings)
3. Are you concerned that other people in the community or other family members will find out what is occurring?
4. Are you dependent on them for financial needs? (consider if the person is ineligible for Centrelink or work rights in Australia, and if they have access to their own bank account)
5. Are you restricted from having contact with your family, friends and community in Australia or overseas? (including children)
6. Did you have a choice about being married? (only relevant if married)
7. Are there any cultural or religious beliefs that would prevent you from leaving the relationship?

As mentioned before, these questions do not need to be asked verbatim, but you should cover this information in your conversation with the client.

Risk is assessed through professional judgement, using intersectional analysis, based on:

1

A victim-survivor's self-assessed level of risk, safety and fear

2

Assessment against evidence-based risk factors (using the relevant state or territory-based assessment tool)

3

Information sharing to inform assessment (as per state and territory legislation)

Based on the clients' risk factors, a safety plan needs to be tailored to their individual circumstances and should involve their input. It may be appropriate and empowering for some victim-survivors to develop their own safety plan with minimal assistance while others may need considerable assistance. The assessor must judge the victim survivor's level of risk and provide the appropriate level of assistance.

1800RESPECT has developed a [safety planning checklist](#) and most state and territory DFV frameworks also include a safety planning checklist.